



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 9, 2008

Contact: Dan Reeves (916) 319-2045

Assistant Majority Leader Kevin de León Blasts Republicans for Holding Up Budget, Failing to Provide Real Budget Solutions

SACRAMENTO—Assistant Majority Leader Kevin de León today issued the following statement about the state budget, which is now 71 days overdue:

“Instead of providing practical, real solutions, the Republicans are demanding draconian cuts, risky gimmicks, and more borrowing. Their so-called budget reforms will do nothing but cripple our ability to ever recover from this fiscal crisis.”

“Education should be our top priority. We are currently 46th in the nation in per-pupil spending, and the Republicans want to cut \$5 Billion more out of our schools. The school district I represent, the Los Angeles Unified School District, is already bracing for \$353 Million in cuts, and the Republicans want to cut at least an additional \$100 Million from the district. In more concrete terms, that number could translate to 1,220 fewer teachers. It could mean 1.4 million fewer textbooks for our students. Our kids deserve better.”

Compared to the funding levels schools received for the 2007-08 fiscal year, the Republican budget proposal would equal a reduction of \$290 per student. To put the harmful impact of this cut in perspective, for elementary, middle, and high schools in Assembly District 45, attached is a chart showing the potential distribution of this budget cut on individual schools.

“Although I have tremendous concerns about the Governor’s August Revise, I hope that his attempt to move us forward with negotiations serves as a blueprint to guide us to a real budget solution. The Democrats have taken a similar stand for a balanced approach—a combination of both cuts and raising revenues—and even conservative commentator Dan Weintraub notes that the Republican budget proposal acknowledges that a ‘cuts only’ budget is not realistic.”

California is currently grappling with a \$15 Billion budget deficit for the 2008-09 fiscal year. The magnitude of this dilemma is staggering: elimination of the state’s entire prison system would only save \$10 Billion, and eliminating all three segments of California’s higher education system—all of the University of California, California State University, and community college campuses—would only save \$10.5 Billion.

Legislative approval of the state budget requires a 2/3 vote.

###